

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Holy Trinity Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Crawford Street,
Seaton Carew,
Hartlepool.
TS25 1BZ

Diocese: Durham

Local authority: Hartlepool

Dates of inspection: 24th & 25th April 2007

Date of last inspection: 9th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd May 2001

School's unique reference number: 111699

Headteacher: Mrs Alison Darby (Acting), Mrs Amanda Baines (on maternity leave)

Inspector's name and number: Karen Pemberton No. 287

School context

Holy Trinity is an average size primary school with 221 pupils on roll aged 4-11. The school serves an area of predominantly private housing and the number of pupils on free school meals is well below average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Holy Trinity Primary as a Church of England school are outstanding.

The Christian ethos permeates every aspect of school life in this warm and nurturing family environment. Staff have high expectations of pupils and this is reflected in exceptionally high achievement. Exemplary standards of behaviour, outstanding attendance levels and an atmosphere of care and respect bear witness to the school's motto "Excellent education in a Christian environment".

Established strengths

- There are exceptionally strong and affirming relationships between all stakeholders.
- Expectations, both academic and social, moral and spiritual are high. All learners are encouraged and nurtured to become confident individuals with questioning minds.
- Collective worship provides a framework for school life, and pupils of all ages are able to express the importance of worship in their own lives.
- There are strong and positive links between the school, the church and the diocese, fostering at all levels an ethos of Christian love and care.

Focus for development

- Further enhance the developing assessment system in RE. Include assessment of key skills (in particular communication) through observation, to better differentiate between levels of attainment.
- Develop more frequent, informal links with parents to evaluate the effectiveness of all areas of school life and to encourage greater participation and involvement in the spiritual life of the school.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners.

The climate of high expectation in the school is one which is founded on love and care for each child. The children know that theirs is a special place of learning, describing it as "a nice, kind, loving school." Learners of all ages demonstrate a high level of confidence and self-esteem and older pupils are able to attribute this to their experiences and the way they are treated. Pupils are able to ask questions which challenge views and beliefs about life, death and faith in an honest and non-judgemental environment. During a Year 5 RE lesson on suffering one child put forward the view that God did not want to stop suffering otherwise

He would not have been responsible for so much of it (citing Noah and the flood as an example). Another child suggested that God was not at all mighty as He did not do anything for Himself, but worked through His love to have other people do things for Him. Both viewpoints were sensitively handled by the teacher and sensibly discussed by the class. Via such open discussion pupils have acquired a well-developed sense of their place in the world and their responsibility to it and to others. A small minority of Hindu pupils is well integrated and catered for. Pupils' achievements in all aspects of life are regularly celebrated. The school is characterised particularly by strong and positive relationships between Governors, staff and pupils. Pupils care very much for each other, are polite and respectful to staff and enthusiastically welcoming to visitors. Younger pupils express this as "being kind", whilst older pupils are unashamedly candid, stating "Because we are a Holy Trinity school we believe in God and share His love with others". Staff relationships are warm and affirming and an atmosphere of good humour and mutual support permeates the building.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.

Worship provides the framework for the school day, week and year. All staff are confident and enthusiastic contributors to daily worship and prayers and a weekly Eucharist celebrated in church is planned specifically with children of all ages in mind. Parents are invited to Eucharist and other services, but some find access difficult and parental participation is not as great as it could be. Worship is exceptionally well planned between school and church and there is evidence of evaluation of its impact. Pupils participate with great enthusiasm in worship of all kinds, are robust singers and openly praise the contribution of the parish priest to their spiritual lives. As a result the children, as part of the whole school community, demonstrate impressive spiritual growth as they move through the school. Communion before confirmation is offered on a biennial basis, following preparation classes, and a significant number of pupils take communion each week. The significance of the Eucharist is clearly understood at all levels and by children of all ages. As one boy put it, "We go to church to share God's love and to regret our sins." Other, younger pupils enjoy church simply because it is "fun". Worship in school is also clearly Anglican in nature including elements such as sharing the peace and responsive prayers.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

Pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of the Christian narrative and are able to tell the stories and relate them to their own experience. Pupils' questioning and enquiry skills are highly developed and RE lessons are used as a vehicle to develop pupils' spiritual, moral and ethical understanding. The themes and topics taught allow pupils to develop an understanding of the world, their place in it and responsibility as stewards of it. Whilst the majority of lessons are spent exploring Christianity, others faiths are studied as appropriate to the school's population. The school judges standards in RE to be in line with expectations. Written evidence of this is not sufficiently clear, however, and there is insufficient evidence of differentiation particularly for the most able. Assessment in RE is at the developmental stage and there is scope for including in the assessment process evidence of key skills such as communication and problem solving. The importance of RE in the school is clearly demonstrated by its impact on other subjects, for example through a Year 5 art project "Jesus through other eyes", and in Reception "God's wonderful creatures" were recreated in clay, paint and wax.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding.

Holy Trinity is a school which lives its vision as a Christian community providing excellent education. Governors are closely involved in the life of the school and the parish priest's contribution is central to many aspects of school life. The staff, led by a clearly committed Head, and at the time of the inspection an equally committed Acting Head, work harmoniously together. This team spirit promotes a sense of belonging amongst all stakeholders, in a warm and affirming environment. All staff members are highly valued members of the team and give freely of their time and enthusiasm. This is as a result of collegiate leadership where everyone is consulted and all opinions and contributions valued and included. The SEF is clearly that of a church school, although this is less evident under the section on Leadership and Management than under the ECM sections. Evaluation of

practice is frequent and inclusive, with staff and governors working in partnership. Pupils are consulted via the School Council and feel that the school listens to them. Parents are consulted formally, but the school could do more to evaluate informally and encourage greater participation and involvement from those parents who do not choose the school for its faith status. Governors would like to see more parents in church supporting their children and this is a possible area for future development. That said, however, there is no doubt that Holy Trinity is an exceptionally well led and highly effective church school.

Holy Trinity Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School Crawford Street, Seaton Carew, Hartlepool. TS25 1BZ April 2007